2. Spelt—50%,

3. Maize (corn)—50%,

4. Rice in the husk (Paddy or rough)—80%,

5. Husked (brown) rice—80%,

6. Semi-milled or wholly milled rice whether or not polished or glazed—70%,

7. Broken rice—80%,

8. Grain sorghum—50%, and

9. Millet—50%.

These changes are expected to discourage the import of these foodgrains. While duty was imposed on wheat with effect from 1-12-1999 in order to stimulate its off-take from the Central Pool, in other cases the increase was carried out on 5-4-2000.

Illicit Drug Trafficking in North-East

3906. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item published in the Hindustan Times dated 24th February, 2000 under the caption, "North-East, Indo-Pak Border emerging as centres for drug trafficking";

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto;

(c) what steps have been taken/are proposed to be taken to check illicit drug trafficking in these areas; and

(d) whether any multi-dimensional approach has been finalised in this regard and if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR): (a) Sir. An article was published in the Hindustan Times of 24-2-2000 under the title "Delhi major hub for drug trafficking".

(b) to (d) India's geographical location between Pakistan and Myanmar makes it a vulnerable transit route for smuggling. But Government of India

has taken a number of significant steps having multi-dimensional approach to prevent drug trafficking. These include instructions to all drug law enforcement agencies to maintain utmost vigil and step up enforcement efforts, training of officers, fencing of Indo-Pak border, vesting of powers in BSF and Coast Guards under the Customs Act, quarterly co-ordination meetings of Central and State drug law enforcement agencies by Narcotics Control Bureau, holding of quarterly border meetings of Indian and Pakistani anti-narcotics agencies as a part of the border meetings of BSF and Pak-rangers and holding of operational level meetings with Myanmar officials.

FICCI Memorandum Regarding Increase in Dividend Tax

3907. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry has submitted a memorandum to him with regard to the increase in dividend tax from 10 per cent to 20 per cent proposed in this year's budget;

(b) if so, the details thereof and his reaction thereto; and

(c) whether the proposed measure would be reviewed with regard to the objections raised in the aforesaid memorandum and if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR) : (a) to (c) No, sir. However, a copy of the memorandum has been obtained from FICCI. The proposals regarding the increase in dividend tax from ten per cent to twenty per cent are being considered by the Government and the decision thereon will be reflected in the response of the Government to the discussion in the Parliament on the Finance Bill, 2000.

Constitution of Expenditure Reforms Commission

3908. SHRI AMAR SINGH:

SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA NAHATA :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have since appointed Expenditure Reforms Commission and if so, the details thereof including the terms of reference; and